

Food and guidelines for healthy eating

Summarised general guidelines on healthy choices

- [Bread, cereals, rice and pastas](#)
- [Vegetables](#)
- [Fruit](#)
- [Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans and nuts](#)
- [Milk, cheese and other dairy products](#)
- [Fats, sweets and alcoholic beverages](#)

Bread, cereals, rice and pastas

Primarily provide complex carbohydrates, riboflavin, thiamin, niacin, iron and folate. Whole grains are particularly rich in magnesium, zinc, and fibre.

EAT MORE OF	EAT LESS OF
BREADS	
Breads and rolls (brown/wholewheat), bagel, pita, hot-cross bun, bran muffins, rye bread, pumpnickel bread, seedloaf	Refined breads (white), garlic bread, croissants, sweet muffins, waffles
GRAIN PRODUCTS	
Rice, pastas, air-popped popcorn	Any grain products cooked with sugar or fat
CEREALS / PORRIDGES	
Unrefined* ready-to-eat cereals, oats, mealie meal, maltabela, muesli *(generally contains the 'whole grain', is low in fat & sugar and high in fibre)	Refined* cereals and porridges *(outer bran husk of the 'whole grain' is removed)
GRAINS	
WHOLE GRAINS - wheat, oats, barley, millet, rye, bulgur Buckwheat, millet, quinoa, sago, semolina, tapioca, triticale	Refined flours
CRACKERS	
Wholewheat crackers	Butter crackers
STARCHY VEGETABLES	
Potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, pumpkin, butternut, peas	French fries (slap chips), other starchy vegetables cooked with sugar and fat
LEGUMES	

DRIED BEANS - adzuki beans, bayo beans, black eyed beans, black beans, borlotti beans, butter beans (broad beans, fava beans), haricot beans, lima beans, pinto beans, sugar beans, white kidney beans (cannellini beans) LENTILS	Any legume (pulses) cooked with sugar or fat
CONFECTIONERIES	
	Cakes, biscuits, pastries, pies, granola, scones, rusks
Although this list is <u>COMPREHENSIVE</u> , it is by no means <u>COMPLETE</u> .	
RECOMMENDATIONS	CHOICES FOR A RESTRICTED BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose whole grain, unrefined foods to add more fibre, vitamins and minerals to your diet. • Combine whole grains with other tasty, nutritious foods in mixed dishes. 	<p>Buy unrefined products whenever possible. Refining makes a product more expensive and the process strips the product of fibre, vitamins and minerals decreasing it's nutrient quality. Standard brown bread is cheaper than white bread, and much cheaper than special breads and rolls. Maize meal is the cheapest kind of porridge. Maltabela or oats porridge cost as much as 3 times as much. Instant cereals are even more expensive. Use mostly maize rice and samp and use more expensive products such as rice, pearl wheat and pasta less often.</p>

Vegetables

Primarily provide vitamin A, vitamin C, folate, magnesium, potassium and fibre.

EAT MORE OF	EAT LESS OF
ROOT AND TUBERS	Candied vegetables Vegetables prepared in butter, oil, and cream sauces
Arrowroot, carrot, bamboo shoots, beetroot, ginger, parsnip, radish, taro root, water chestnut	
CRUCIFEROUS	
Bok choy, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnip greens, turnips, leafy greens (cabbage, collard greens, brussell sprouts, mustard)	
LEAFY GREEN	
Spinach, silverbeet, endive	
MARROW-LIKE	
Cucumber, aubergines (eggplant), marrow, squash,	

swede, turnip, courgettes (zucchini)	
FLOWERS	
Chicory, lettuce	
STALKS	
Asparagus, celery	
ONION	
Garlic, leek, onions, spring onion	
PEPPERS	
Bell peppers, capsicum, chillies	
SPROUTS	
Bean sprouts	
EDIBLE PODS	
Okra, snow peas, sugar snap peas	
CORMS	
Artichokes	
SNAP BEANS (STRING)	
Green beans, snap beans	
FUNGI	
Mushrooms	
FRUIT VEGETABLE	
Tomatoes	

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RECOMMENDATIONS	CHOICES FOR A RESTRICTED BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a variety of vegetables. • Include dark-green leafy vegetables (spinach, mustard and collard greens) or deep-yellow vegetables (carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin) at least every day. • Eat more vegetable based-meals (e.g. vegetable stew). • Add extra vegetables to main dishes (e.g. lasagne, casseroles, curries, stir-fries) salads and soups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose any vegetable in season. They are cheaper, fresher and more nutritional. • Buy only fresh vegetables as wilted or vegetables lying in the sun have lost a lot of their nutritional value. • Outside leaves of lettuce, cabbage and cauliflower and the tops of turnips and beetroot can be used as they are rich in vitamins and minerals. • Limit the purchasing of expensive vegetables such as mushrooms, green peppers and bean sprouts. Find cheaper ways to flavour dishes. • Starting a vegetable garden is an easy and inexpensive way to provide fresh vegetables. However this does take time, patience and dedication.

Fruit

Primarily provide vitamin A, vitamin C and fibre.

EAT MORE OF	EAT LESS OF
STONE FRUIT	Fruit pies and pastries, sweetened juices, fruit canned in syrup, coconut, dried fruit with sugar coating
Apricot, avocado, cherry, nectarine, peach, plum, prune	
CITRUS FRUIT	
Orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit (pummelo), naartjie, tangerine	
BERRIES	
Raspberry, strawberry, blueberry, blackberry, grapes	
TROPICAL FRUIT	
Banana, guava, jackfruit, kiwifruit, lychee, mango, papaya, passionfruit paw-paw, pineapple, starfruit (carambola)	
MELONS	
Cantaloupe (sweetmelon), honeydew, rockmelon, watermelon	
POME FRUIT	
Apple, pear, loquats	
FRUIT JUICE	
100% Pure unsweetened juice	
DRIED FRUIT	
Any dried fruit including raisins, dates and sultanas	
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RECOMMENDATIONS	CHOICES FOR A RESTRICTED BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give preference to fresh, whole fruit. • Try to include a citrus fruit and another fruit high in vitamin C (kiwi fruit, strawberries, cantaloupe) daily. • Try a new fruit each week. • Eat fruits as snacks and desserts • Add sliced fruit/dried fruit to your cereal, muesli or yoghurt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit bought at markets are usually cheaper than at the greengrocer. • Choose any fruit in season. They are cheaper, fresher and have a greater nutritional value than fruit that has been stored. • Take care not to buy fruit that have bruises as these may have lost nutrients and are therefore not good buys. • Be careful not to buy more fruit than you will eat as these will be wasted. • Don't buy very ripe as these often become spoilt

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans and nuts

Primarily provide protein, vitamin B, vitamin B12, phosphorous, iron, niacin, thiamin and magnesium.

EAT MORE OF	EAT LESS OF
MEATS	
<u>LEAN CUTS</u> - beef, pork, veal, venison	Ground beef (mince; excluding extra lean mince), sausage, hot dogs, viennas, bacon, polony, luncheon meats (cold meats), lamb, fried meats, fish or poultry ANIMAL ORGAN MEATS - liver, heart, kidneys, lungs, brains
POULTRY	
Chicken, turkey, duck, guinea fowl	Any poultry cooked in fat or oil
SEAFOOD	
Fish, Choose fresh or canned fish from the green list. Go to http://www.wvfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=8	Any seafood cooked in fat or oil
LEGUMES	
Dried Beans, dried split peas, lentils Soya and Soya products Peanuts	Any legumes cooked in fat or oil
NUTS	
Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecan nuts, pistachio, walnut	Any nuts covered with coatings (chocolate etc.)
OTHER ALTERNATES	
Eggs, Peanut Butter	Fried eggs
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RECOMMENDATIONS	CHOICES FOR A RESTRICTED BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give preference to fish, poultry (without skin), and legumes (dry beans, lentils, soya and soya products, split peas), as these are the choices lowest in fat. • Try to eat fatty fish (tuna, salmon or snoek) two times a week as these are rich in omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, which is protective against heart disease. • Choose lean meats, look for unmarbled cuts i.e. meat cuts not speckled with fat. • Decrease fat during meat preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trim all the fat you can see. • Remove skin from poultry. • Broil, roast, grill, stew, braise or boil these foods instead of frying them. • Use a non-stick pan or a vegetable spray to fry and to avoid adding oil. • If you do fry, use vegetable or olive oil instead of saturated fats such as 	<p><u>MEATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare meat prices at the butcher and the supermarkets. • Choose meat that has less bones and fat. Soup bones are therefore a bad buy. It is better to buy a packet of dried beans. • Buy less tinned meat, polony and other cold meats and sausage, as processed meat is usually expensive, and often contain fillings like fat, gravy, vegetables and/or cereals in large quantities. <p><u>CHICKEN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying a bigger chicken usually yields more meat and less bone proportionally than a smaller chicken. • Compare the price per kilogram for whole chicken and chicken portions as there is more bone in whole chicken.

<p>lard or shortening. Stir-fry the food rather than deep-fry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place meat on a rack when cooking so that fat can drip off. • Nuts, seeds, and peanut butter are high in fat, so eat them in moderation. • Preferably choose fish, which is water-packed; oil-packed, only adds fat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken liver is one of the cheapest and most nutritious forms of meat. <p><u>FISH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tinned fish like pilchards is the cheapest form of fish. Other forms of canned fish are expensive. • Fresh fish is usually more expensive than frozen, except at the coast. • Whole fish is usually cheaper than fish without bones. The head and fins can be used for fish soup. However compare the price per portion and not per kilogram. <p><u>LEGUMES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried legumes are not only good substitutes for meat, fish, eggs or cheese, but can be used to make foods go further (meat extenders). • It is not necessary to eat meat everyday. Meat alternatives, which are cheaper can be used as substitutes or used to bulk up meals. • Add cooked dried beans to stewed meat. • Mix mashed, cooked dried beans with mince or fish to make meat loaf or fish cakes or meatballs. • Soya beans have been processed to form textured soya proteins that resemble meat in taste and look, and can therefore be used as meat substitutes. • Textured soya protein products can be used to stretch mince in bobotie, fricadels and other meat or chicken dishes. • One kilogram of dried beans yields 33 portions, while 1 kilogram meat yields 9 portions (1 cup dried beans, raw yields ± 8 cups cooked). <p><u>PEANUT BUTTER</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanut Butter can be used as a sandwich filling and can be stirred into porridge.
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Milk, cheese and other dairy products

Primarily provide calcium, riboflavin, protein and vitamin B12. Fortified products also provide vitamin D and vitamin A.

EAT MORE OF	EAT LESS OF
MILK	
Skim (Non fat / fat free), and low fat (0.5 - 1.5%) milk either fresh, UHT or powdered	Full cream (Whole milk) either fresh, UHT or powdered Milk blends
DAIRY PRODUCTS	
Fat free / low fat dairy products including - e.g. cheese, cottage cheese, yoghurt, milkshakes Low fat buttermilk	Full cream dairy products - e.g. regular hard yellow cheese, full cream milk shakes, real dairy ice-creams

Maas or Amasi is a fermented dairy product that has very specific health benefits.	
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RECOMMENDATIONS	CHOICES FOR A RESTRICTED BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give preference to low fat or fat free options. • Use skim milk or low fat milk when making sauces. • Use low-fat yoghurts instead of cream in recipes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim milk powder (SMP) costs less than fresh milk and has a similar nutrient content (Note: Follow the instructions on the package to mix the correct quantity of water with milk powder). • SMP does not need to be stored in the refrigerator and can therefore be bought in bulk to save money. • Skim milk powder can be stored for 6 months in an airtight container. • Fresh milk should be used within 3-4 days. • People who prefer the taste of fresh milk can save money by mixing 1 litre of whole milk with 100g of skim-milk powder and 1 litre of water. • Milk blends may be cheaper but they are not a good buy. They contain creamers and have a lower nutritional value than that of skim-milk powder. Only buy products that have a Real Dairy mark. • Yoghurts, condensed milk and evaporated milk are expensive as should be used sparingly. • Non-dairy creamers (e.g. coffee creamers) are not milk even though they whiten tea or coffee. They don't have the nutrients that milk which build teeth and bones. <p>NOTE: Everyone requires milk throughout life so rather save on the kind of milk you buy rather than the amount.</p>

Fats, sweets and alcoholic beverages

Primarily provide sugar, fat and alcohol and therefore are high in energy.

EAT / DRINK LESS OF
FOODS HIGH IN FAT
Butter, margarine, oils, gravy, cream cheese, oil-based salad dressing, mayonnaise, potato crisps, olives, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, chocolates, burgers, hotdogs, fried food or snacks
FOODS HIGH IN SUGAR
Cakes, cookies, doughnuts, sweets, jelly, syrup, gelatine, desserts, sugar, honey, preserves, jam, soft drinks, cordials, fruit drinks (non-pure)
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
Wine (red wine, white wine), beer, milk stout, spirits (vodka, brandy, rum, tequila, whiskey), liquor etc.
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RECOMMENDATIONS	CHOICES FOR A RESTRICTED BUDGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sparingly as these foods are high in energy but provide few nutrients. • Foods from this category should not replace food from any other group. • Inclusion of these foods should be determined by individual energy needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choose foods from the other groups before making choices from these group as these provide very few nutrients apart from energy and fat-soluble vitamins. • These foods (except alcoholic beverages) can be used to add energy to a meal. • Hard margarine in bricks is cheaper than soft margarine in tubs, however they should be used very sparingly. • Limit the use of oil by not frying food. • Mayonnaise and salad dressings are expensive and should be used occasionally. These can be substituted with cheaper alternatives or homemade dressings. Examples are vinegar or vinaigrette etc.

For further, personalized and more detailed information, please contact a dietitian registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. References from the scientific literature used to compile this document are available on request.

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